

To: Burneson, Eric[Burneson.Eric@epa.gov]
From: binetti, victoria
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Subject: Sampling study

Related to the statistician/study design inquiry:

Tomblin Directs State to Conduct Home Water Testing

By Ken Ward Jr.

The Charleston Gazette



Lawrence Pierce

Dr. Tanja Popovic, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Environmental Health, defends her agency's 1-part-per-million screening level for MCHM at a news conference set up by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin.

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Two hours after dismissing the idea at a high-profile news conference, Tomblin administration officials said Wednesday they would come up with a testing plan to see if Crude MCHM from the Jan. 9 Elk River leak is still inside home plumbing systems in West Virginia.

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin directed the multi-agency team handling the state's leak response to come up with a plan for testing a representative sample of homes, said Amy Goodwin, the governor's communications director.

"This is something that we have discussed and will continue to discuss and work through best practices in developing a plan of action," Goodwin said.

The announcement followed an afternoon news conference the Governor's Office staged to try to quell growing public concern about the water supply and the long-term impact of the leak.

In the reception area just outside Tomblin's Capitol office, officials from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention crowded around a podium with a large contingent of state

government representatives.

The event came just two days after residents at a legislative public hearing repeatedly complained about the Tomblin administration's handling of the crisis that followed the chemical leak that contaminated the drinking water for 300,000 West Virginians.

"I am frustrated and angry," the governor told reporters and television cameras. "I share your concerns about the water crisis. I heard you, and I am listening."

Tomblin dismissed questions about any plans for home testing of tap water, saying there was no way the state or federal government could do such sampling in all 100,000 homes and businesses impacted by the leak.

Asked why the state doesn't instead do a study that examines a smaller, but representative sample of how MCHM is reacting with home plumbing systems, the governor would say only, "That's one of those things we can look at doing."

Tomblin's comments on home testing echoed statements made Tuesday by EPA and CDC officials in interviews with the Gazette, that the state had no plans for home testing, and the federal government had decided not to press the Tomblin administration on the matter.

During the news conference, though, EPA and CDC officials had trouble answering when asked if testing of home tap water would provide them valuable data in understanding the potential long-term impact of the Freedom Industries' leak.

Dr. Tanja Popovic, director of the CDC's National Center for Environmental Health, said all home plumbing systems are different and that materials sometimes stop in them and sometimes move inside them.

That's exactly the argument that Andrew Whelton, a University of South Alabama environmental engineer who has been testing West Virginia water systems, had made in urging the government to test inside homes in the leak-impact area.

Popovic said a study of the sort Whelton has called for is not a bad idea but that officials would need to consider how many homes could be tested, and ensure it's a large enough sample to produce a reliable result.

<http://www.wvgazette.com/News/201402050031>

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